

AMENDMENT TO THE CLAIMS

1. (Canceled)

2. (Previously Presented) The article in accordance with Claim 3, wherein a width of said pocket traverses substantially an entire width of said back region.

3. (Currently Amended) An absorbent article comprising:
an elongated material having two enlarged end portions and a narrowed portion intermediate said two enlarged end portions, one of said two enlarged end portions corresponding to a back region of said absorbent article; and
said elongated material comprising a fluid impermeable backsheet, a fluid permeable body-side liner attached to one side of said fluid impermeable backsheet, and a flap sheet attached directly to said fluid permeable body-side liner by point bonds at opposed peripheral edges of the flap sheet, said flap sheet including two opposed pleats and being expandable in a direction away from said fluid impermeable backsheet proximate said back region of said absorbent article, whereby the pleats define a pocket between the flap sheet and the body-side liner for collection of fecal matter;

wherein the two opposed pleats are disposed substantially parallel to a longitudinal centerline of said elongated material.

E¹
4. (Previously Presented) The absorbent article in accordance with Claim 3, wherein at least one of said flap sheet, said fluid impermeable backsheet and said fluid permeable body-side liner comprises a nonwoven material.


5. (Previously Presented) The absorbent article in accordance with Claim 4, wherein said nonwoven material is selected from the group consisting of spunbond, meltblown, bonded carded web and combinations thereof.

6. (Previously Presented) The absorbent article in accordance with Claim 3, wherein said fluid permeable body-side liner is a multi-layer material comprising an absorbent layer and a fluid permeable top sheet, said absorbent layer being disposed between said fluid impermeable backsheet and said fluid permeable top sheet.

7. (Previously Presented) The absorbent article in accordance with Claim 3, wherein said flap sheet is fluid impermeable.

8.  (Canceled)

9. (Currently Amended) A disposable diaper comprising:

 a fluid impermeable outer cover, a fluid permeable body-side liner attached to said fluid impermeable outer cover and a flap sheet attached directly to said fluid permeable body-side liner by point bonds at opposed peripheral edges of the flap sheet, said flap sheet including two opposed discrete pleats and expandable in a direction away from said fluid impermeable outer cover whereby a pocket is defined between the discrete pleats and formed inside said disposable diaper between the flap sheet and the body-side liner and proximate a back region of said disposable diaper;

wherein the discrete pleats are ~~disposed along opposed sides of said pocket and~~ substantially parallel to a longitudinal centerline of said diaper.

10. (Previously Presented) The disposable diaper in accordance with Claim 9, wherein said pocket substantially traverses an entire width of said back region of said disposable diaper.

11. (Previously Presented) The disposable diaper in accordance with Claim 9, wherein said flap sheet comprises a nonwoven web.

12. (Previously Presented) The disposable diaper in accordance with Claim 11, wherein said nonwoven web is selected from the group consisting of spunbond, meltblown, bonded carded web and combinations thereof.

13. (Previously Presented) The disposable diaper in accordance with Claim 9, wherein said fluid permeable body-side liner is a multi-layer material comprising an absorbent layer and a fluid permeable top sheet, said absorbent layer being disposed between said fluid impermeable outer cover and said fluid permeable top sheet.

14. (Previously Presented) The disposable diaper in accordance with Claim 9, wherein said flap sheet is fluid impermeable.

15. (Currently Amended) A method for producing a disposable absorbent article comprising the steps of:

forming a substantially rectangular multi-layer material comprising a fluid impermeable backsheet, a fluid permeable body-side liner attached to one side of said fluid impermeable backsheet, and a flap sheet attached directly to said fluid permeable body-side liner whereby said body-side liner is disposed between said fluid impermeable backsheet and said flap sheet;

removing a portion of said material from opposed longitudinal edges of said substantially rectangular multi-layer material, producing two enlarged end portions and a narrowed portion intermediate said two enlarged end portions, one of said enlarged end portions corresponding to a back region of said disposable absorbent article; and

forming at least two discrete longitudinal pleats in said flap sheet proximate said back region along opposed sides of said flap sheet, the longitudinal pleats defining peripheral sides of a pocket between said flap sheet and said body-side liner.

16. (Previously Presented) The method in accordance with Claim 15, wherein at least one layer of said multi-layer material comprises a nonwoven material.

17. (Previously Presented) The method in accordance with Claim 16, wherein said nonwoven material is selected from the group consisting of spunbond, meltblown, bonded carded web and combinations thereof.

18. (Currently Amended) An absorbent article comprising:
an elongated material having two enlarged end portions and a narrowed portion intermediate the two enlarged end portions, one of the two enlarged end portions corresponding to a back region of the absorbent article; and

the elongated material comprising a fluid impermeable backsheet, a fluid permeable body-side liner attached to one side of the fluid impermeable backsheet, and a pocket sheet having opposed peripheral edges, the opposed peripheral edges attached ~~by point bonds~~ directly to the fluid permeable body-side liner, and at least two opposed pleats in the pocket sheet along opposite sides of the pocket sheet and disposed substantially parallel to a longitudinal centerline of the elongated material, whereby the pocket sheet is expandable in a direction away from the fluid impermeable backsheet and the pleats of the pocket sheet define peripheral sides, respectively, of a pocket between the pocket sheet and the body-side liner for collection of fecal matter.